

**CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
MINUTES OF GENERAL SESSION #643
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2002
VETERANS HOME OF CALIFORNIA--BARSTOW**

GENERAL SESSION:

The California Veterans Board (CVB) monthly public meeting was called to order 9:00 AM. Board members present included Chairman George Sinopoli (Fresno), Vice Chairman Edward Feldman (Westlake Village), Members Jerry Basconcillo (Delano), John Fitzke (Citrus Heights), Judy Gaze (San Diego), Larry Lattman (California Veterans Home in Yountville). Pedro Carrillo (Los Angeles) was Excused. Invocation was presented by Jay Morales Post 8 American Legion, Bill Jackson, Commander of American Legion Post 855, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Sinopoli introduced the Mayor of Barstow Honorable Lawrence Dale, who presented a welcome to all present and stated how proud Barstow was to have the Veterans Home in their city. The key members from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) were introduced, including Bruce Thiesen Secretary of California Department of Veterans Affairs; Joe Maguire, Chief Council; John Hanretty, Chief Finance Division; George Flores, Chief of Farm and Home Division; Jack Kirwan, CDVA Budget Officer; Ron Brand, Chief of Marketing; Tom Arnold, Administrator of Veterans Home in Chula Vista; John Heltsley, Administrator of the Barstow Veterans Home; Bruce Phillips, Deputy Assist for CDVA Veterans Home Division; Jerry Hansen, the Inspector General; and Earl Steck, CVB Executive Officer. Tom Craft of the Governors Vet Home Selection Commission was also present. The 90 guests in the audience introduced themselves. Chairman Sinopoli thanked all present for attending and supporting the veterans programs.

The minutes from the CVB meeting of December 7-8 in Yountville, California, were approved with an amendment that included the following statement which had been omitted at the end of the meeting. Chairman George Sinopoli stated that an election of Chairman was to be placed on the agenda. "The reason for having a call for Election of Chairman for the California Veterans Board is to allow the three new members the opportunity to vote on who they want for the Board Chairman".

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS:

Secretary Bruce Thiesen of the California Department of Veterans Affairs presented his welcoming remarks and thanked the Barstow Staff, community supporters, Local Labor Union and Residents at Barstow for passing the DHS inspection. The Department is extremely proud of the Home for passing the survey and reimbursements for past costs will now be processed. He reported that the HQ of CDVA is working hard to ensure the highest standards are maintained at all three CA Vet Homes. He also announced Governor Davis appointed Tom Kraus the new Undersecretary of the California Department of Veteran Affairs. Tom comes to the Department with excellent credentials and desire to help veterans. Several events are planned in April to recognize Korean War Veterans. The "Homeless Veterans Programs" are still growing. The Department is working with business development to support Disabled Vets. The College Fee Waiver program is ongoing. The Veterans Cemetery program is still being worked with sites selected for the future.

REPORT FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON ACTIVITIES FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY:

George Sinopoli reported vacationing in Hawaii and continued business by phone and mail.

Member Jerry Basconcillo reported attending the monthly Board meetings and participation in American Legion activities during the month.

Member Larry Lattman reported attending Northern California Chapter of Daughters of American Revolution.

Member Ed Feldman reported his activities included attending the last CVB meeting, attended a ceremony at Miramar Air Base, attended a special operation training group and presented instruction on prioritization of field injuries at Camp Pendleton.

Member Pedro Carrillo was excused from the meeting, however his telephonic report indicated he participated in CVB monthly meeting and his American Legion Post 804 events.

Member John Fitzke reported attending CVSO meeting in Sacramento.

Member Judy Gaze reported attending CDVA overview briefings presented by key staff personnel at the headquarters, learning a great deal. The trip was very worthwhile.

VETERANS HOMES OF CALIFORNIA UPDATES:

Yountville – Marcella McCormack, Administrator:

Marcella reported the census of the VA Home in Yountville to be 1,107 residents as of January 24, 2002. The American Legion Auxiliary, native Daughters of the Golden West, and various other group activities were held during the Christmas holiday and New Year's period. Key events in March will include a Home Talent Show and Annual Art Show. The Yountville Allied Council held its election of officers with 70% of the residents voting to reelect Larry Lattman as President, Pete Peterson as Vice, Bessie Summers as Delegate at Large, and Tom Sarbeck as 1st Alternate.

Barstow – John Heltsley, Administrator:

The following report was submitted: Census at the VA Home in Barstow is 213 in residence. Various Veterans Day activities were conducted and several December-January activities are also conducted. The California Department of Health Services conducted a survey January 8-11 and found the Home in substantial compliance.. The USDVA inspection was completed on December 11, 2001 with no deficiencies. Home was graded 100% in SNF,RCFE and DOM, full certification was granted. Barstow Area Chamber of Commerce nominated the Veterans Home for Large Business of the Year.

Chula Vista – Tom Arnold, Administrator:

The following report was submitted: The census at the VA Home in Chula Vista is 212 residents. They successfully passed the USDVA survey on November 5. California DHS visited the Home January 22-28 to conduct a SNF licensure survey; results are pending. On-duty personnel number 133 with an additional 120 to be hired to staff the Nursing Home once CA DHS approval to proceed is granted. Community support continues to be very positive. Currently 14 residents are in community nursing homes, with a waiting list of 124 residents for skilled nursing.

Veterans Home Division - George Andries, Deputy Secretary of CDVA Homes:

Thanked all residents of the home and staff for outstanding work in passing the CA Dept of Health Services Survey. He reported the direction of the Homes Division is towards quality improvement of all the California Veterans Homes. They are all working together to establish a common set of goals.

The focus is in providing a continuum of care for residents, being alert to the needs of residents at each of the Californian Veterans Homes, and looking at other areas where veterans will need increased services for the Chronic mentally ill, Care of Aging, and Alzheimer's & Dementia veterans. The Homes Division is also working towards improving services for Adult Day Care, Domiciliary, Residential Care of Elderly, Intermediate Care and Skilled Nursing Units. The SNF at Chula Vista is now moving forward and the hiring of nurses is underway.

DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS REPORTS:

Farm and Home Purchases Division – George Flores, Chief:

The following report was submitted: During the month of January Farm and Home funded 55 loans totaling \$9,406,166. The quest of quality improvement continues with workshops on the Baldrige System. An update on the Indemnity Program was presented by Ms. Kathie McLaughlin of March Risk & Insurance Services. The events of the 9-11 terrorist attacks have made an impact on all areas of the insurance business, however the CDVA programs are doing very well. Key points of the presentation included:

- Any increase in premium will not affect the premium that the veterans pay
- Deductibles under this program are better than those under California Earthquake Authority
- Pending finalization on Earthquake and Flood coverage
- Final agreements will be reached mid March, 2002.

MOTION BY JUDY GAZE--BOARD ALLOWS THE SELECT COMMITTEE TO REVIEW AND APPROVE FINAL PROPOSAL DUE BEFORE NEXT BOARD MEETING. MOTION PASSED.

Veterans Services Division – Glen Halsey, Chief:

The following report was submitted: During the calendar year 2001, 16,268 veterans purchased veterans license plates. The Tuition Fee Waiver Program continues to progress with assistance from the CVSO; a total 13,469 letters were granted. 574 were denied waivers due to income level exceeding the established US Census Bureau poverty threshold of \$8,959.

Legal Division – Joseph Maguire, Deputy Secretary/Chief Counsel:

The following report was submitted: The law office is working 132 cases. CDVA just hired two attorneys to assist in servicing cases more quickly. Current pending actions include key cases for Barstow, Yountville, and Chula Vista, Fire and Hazard Insurance Program, Appeals to actions by CA Dept of Health Services. Two new attorneys have joined the staff -- John Jackson USN veteran, and Lora Curtis.

CDVA Marketing, Ron Brand:

Reviewed efforts on behalf of new bills to support veterans efforts that the CDVA and CVB are supporting. Recommended each veteran call their congressmen and voice support for veterans bills.

Inspector General, Jerry Hansen:

His office continues to assist the Veterans Homes with programs and special requests. Due to his low staffing he uses retired annuitants for supporting the CDVA with internal audits. He provided copies of report on the Veterans Homes accounting process, which found no major concerns.

APPEALS:

1. Levy, Jerome: Review of Records, Denial of admittance from Veterans Home of Californian in Yountville. Assigned to Jerry Basconcillo.
2. Stevens, David J: Request for appeal was closed. Mr. Stevens passed away on January 1, 2002.
3. Ellis, Richard D: Request for review of Sale Bid was referred to Legal Council for action.

SELECT COMMITTEES REPORTS:

Veterans Homes – Larry Lattman reported on a request for assistance with a security problem by the President of the Allied Council at Barstow. The concern was taken care of by a phone call to Secretary Thiesen.

Veterans Services – Jerry Basconcillo, Chair: Nothing to add to report given on Friday.

Contract Review -- Jerry Basconcillo, Chair: Nothing to add to report given.

Farm and Home -- Judy Gaze, Chair: Motion to support Disaster Indemnity Program, Passed..

Policy and Procedures -- Edward Feldman, Chair: Nothing to Report.

Recognition and Awards -- John Fitzke, Chair: Recommendation to present Commendations to Anne Wright and Kitty Rollins was approved. Recommendations to present plaques to Leo Burke past CVB Chairman, Sherry McLaughlin National President of American Legion Auxiliary, James Goldsmith Commander-in-Chief of VFW and George Jeffers an active supporter of Veterans were all approved.

Annual Report and Legislation – John Fitzke, Chair: The Board was tasked by the State Legislature to report annually on accomplishments, activities and expenses. That report is due to the Governor and the Legislature in October of each year. He has worked with the Board Executive Officer and developed an outline structuring the details of the Board's accomplishments with charts and explanations of all activities and expenses of the California Veterans Board members.

Legislation – John Fitzke, Chair: Read letter from Assemblymember Sally Havice requesting the California Veterans Board support for Assembly House Resolution 32 (proper display of US Flag), Assembly Joint Resolution 26 (investigate discrimination against Military Reserve); Assembly Concurrent Resolutions 130 (support of Gold Star Mother Week), and 133 (support Merchant Marine Remembrance Week). He also recommends the Board support SB 1234 sponsored by Senator Johannessen enacting the Veterans Homes Act of 2002 which supports Bond issue for planning, designing, and construction of Veterans Homes in Los Angeles, Fresno, and Shasta Counties.

MOTION: The California Veterans Board support all the Resolutions contained in Assemblymember Havice letter. **Motion passed.**

MOTION: The California Veterans Board supports Senate Bill 1234 (Johannessen). **Motion Passed.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. Bill O'Connor, President of Allied Council of Barstow, requested assistance from President of Allied Council of Yountville, Larry Lattman, in improvements of Barstow Home Newspaper and interactions with Staff of Barstow Home. Larry Lattman will gladly assist. Larry recommended a review of the Veterans Bill of Rights which was passed into law three years ago.
2. Dorothy Davis requested clarification on unreimbursements of cost of living to the Home. She was told that her trust would protect her inheritance. However the Home was to be paid first for the unreimbursed expenses charged to her account. The amount is determined by totaling the actual cost of care received from day of admission to day of death, then crediting any/all reimbursement received on the members behalf, i.e. fees and charges, VA per diem, Medicare, Medi-cal, and other supplemental health insurance.

3. Betty Boy and Charles Bilyeu voiced concern over the rule of “no wine or beer in the Home”. That concern was referred to the Director of the Barstow Veterans Home.
4. Bill Jackson requested the CVB invite Governor Davis to visit the Barstow Home in the near future. A letter of invitation will be sent by the Board and Secretary Thiesen volunteered to coordinate.

OLD BUSINESS: None to report.

NEW BUSINESS/AGENDA ITEMS

1. Governor’s Proposed 2002-2003FY Budget Impact on CDVA.

The CDVA Budget was not cut by the Governor’s Budget Plan. The Finance Division has upgraded its accounting system this year and improved service to veterans a great deal. The Finance Division is involved in the Baldwin Quality Control System. Other improvements include appointment of Jack Kirwan as the CDVA Budget Officer.

2. Renewal of Disaster Indemnity Program.

Details provided in the Farm and Home Division report above.

3. Veterans Home of California -- Barstow update on Re-certification.

Details provided in the Veterans Home Division report above

4. Veterans Home of California -- Chula Vista Skilled Nursing Facility update

Details provided in the Veterans Home Division report above

All meeting dates and locations can be found online at the Cal Dept of Veteran Affairs web site listed below. The Board will hold meetings throughout the State. No meetings scheduled for January and July. March 8-9 is scheduled in Chula Vista, April 12-13 in Sacramento (DATE CHANGED TO APRIL 19-20), May 17-18 in South Lake Tahoe, June 21-22 Thousand Oaks, August 2-3 in Redding, September 13-14 in Newport Beach, October 4-5 in San Diego, November 1-2 in Fresno and December 6-7 at Veterans Home of California in Yountville.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 10:33 AM.

These minutes are only a summary of the proceeding and are not reported here verbatim. These minutes will be posted to the California Department of Veterans Affairs on-line web site at www.cdva.ca.gov/board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Earl N. Steck
Executive Officer
California Veterans Board